Even Through The Pouring Rain

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Even Through The Pouring Rain

by Redlineriot

Summary

Hannibal comes home after a late night at the office to find Will sitting on his porch in the rain.

Notes

See the end of the work for notes

Hannibal had lost track of time- something that was too easy to do these days. Whether he was sat at his harpsichord for hours on end or he became lost in another sketch, Hannibal Lecter had been slacking in punctuality lately.

When he finally looked up from his most recent sketch, a drawing of St. Peter's Basilica, he realized it was past midnight. Hannibal was set to leave his office around nine pm but got lost in the movement of the pencil on the paper. At the notice of the late time, he gathered his belongings and slipped on his jacket.

He could hear the rain pounding on the roof and it showed no sign of stopping soon. It had been going steady for almost three hours now, and while Hannibal was a fan of the morose and ominous atmosphere, the low winter temperatures made for an unpleasant experience if one were to be exposed to the rain.

He drew in a deep breath before switching off the lights, letting the grand room fall dark. With a briefcase in hand and a jacket on his shoulders, he pulled open the door and prepared to brave the cold for the brief walk to his car.

It was a short walk down the driveway and an even shorter drive home. The rain didn't lighten up at all, constantly pounding against the front of the black car. Most drivers are tense or nervous to drive in such intense conditions, but Hannibal didn't mind. He knew the drive home better than he knew himself. He had every turn and bend memorized, every pothole, and stop sign too. He could argue that he could make the drive from his office to his house with his eyes closed.

He soon arrived at the grand marvel that was his house and shifted the car into park, sighing at the buckets of rain pouring down from the sky. He was going to have to get out of the car at some point, so with a sharp inhale he grabbed his briefcase and slipped out into the rain.

The moment he got out of the car he noticed the figure on the steps. They were curled up against one of the columns, shaking in the cold.

Even through the pouring rain, Hannibal recognized who it was.

"Will?" Hannibal called out, approaching the steps and getting a better look at the boy shivering on his porch.

Will didn't even look up. He was wearing a grey shirt which was passed soaked, and thin pajama pants. He could have easily hidden from the rain under the porch covering but remained on the top step where the roof didn't quite shelter.

"What are you doing here?" Hannibal asked. He had originally planned on staying as dry as possible, but now he was standing in the downpour, his hair becoming plastered to his face and his suit beginning to darken in colour. Yet he barely noticed. His attention was directed to the boy on the steps.

Will finally looked up and dark circles decorated the underside of his eyes. He didn't say anything and he kept his face still, but Hannibal could tell from the darkness in Will's eyes that something was wrong. Will had had his fair share of ups and downs- it seemed there were usually more downs than there were ups- but not even then had he looked so distraught. Hannibal had seen Will scared, confused, even hopeless. But this- this was something new entirely. Will looked *lost.*

"Why don't you come inside?" Hannibal offered, moving past Will to unlock the front door.

He could feel the warmth flooding out from the inside of his house, but he remained in the cold waiting for Will to stand. What seemed like an eternity later, Will raised a shaky hand and gripped the ledge on the column, pulling himself off the steps. He turned around and kept his head low, avoiding Hannibal's gaze. He let Will go inside first before quickly following suit and closing the door behind them.

Hannibal flicked on the lights and watched as the foyer became illuminated. Will had been in Hannibal's house many times before, often barging in as if it was his own. Except now he looked out of place- as if he didn't know what to do with himself. He stood awkwardly against the wall, rainwater pooling at his bare feet.

"How long were you waiting?" Hannibal asked, leading Will through the hall and into a sitting area.

"Not long," Will's voice was trembling. "Just over an hour."

Hannibal furrowed his brow in confusion and exited the room to retrieve a towel from the bathroom.

"You realize you could have phoned me, don't you?" Hannibal was used to getting phone calls from Will. Whether it was for requesting help with a case or something more serious, it wasn't an uncommon occurrence.

Hannibal wrapped the towel around Will's shoulders and instructed him to sit on the plush sofa. Will looked unsure at first, as if he was worried about getting the furniture wet, but when Hannibal took a seat in a chair Will followed.

Hannibal tried to let Will speak first. He noticed that humans try to fill the silence, for they always think there must be conversation to enjoy someone's company. If one is to wait long enough, the other person will be spilling their guts like there's no tomorrow.

The rain outside was pouring down, slamming against the windows and the roof and yet the only water Hannibal could concentrate were the few drops that slid down the sides of Will's face or fell from his hair. He held the towel close, wrapping himself up as tight as he could manage. Despite being out of the rain he was still shaking, his legs bouncing on the ground.

He needed to get Will out of his clothes.

Without an explanation, Hannibal stood from his chair and moved across the room, disappearing down the winding hallways and up the grand stairs. He was sure to have

something that could fit Will- he didn't look too different in size.

Hannibal didn't really have an abundance of casual clothes, but he managed to find a pair of drawstring linen pants alongside an old sweatshirt he had gotten while attending Johns Hopkins. It wasn't in his best nature to buy university memorabilia, but someone had gifted it to him and he couldn't decline. That would have been rude. Hannibal Lecter was not someone who kept scrapbooks and trinkets, but some things he just couldn't bring himself to get rid of.

Soon enough Will was sitting on the couch before him, his wet clothes castaway in the nearest bathroom and replaced by the clothes that had been hidden away in the back of Hannibal's closet. They didn't fit him quite right, but he seemed to have stopped shivering so they served their purpose.

Hannibal remained silent, crossing his legs and waiting for Will to speak first.

"I saw him," Will breathed out.

"Who? Garret Jacob Hobbs?" Hannibal asked, saying the first name to come to mind.

Will shook his head and smiled, murmuring under his breath. "No, no, no. Not *him.* "

Hannibal cocked his head and studied Will, trying to draw conclusions from the little information he had been provided with.

"Then who?"

Will stared at the hardwood floor, remaining silent. Hannibal tried hard to think of a vile male figure in Will's life, but he just couldn't seem to come up with one. He could tell how difficult it was for Will to speak, either from the cold or from fear, and while he was labeled as a psychopath he didn't always enjoy watching people struggle. Especially not Will- it was frustrating to say the least.

"My father," Will eventually spat, running a hand through his damp hair and proceeding to plaster a few curls to his forehead.

"What was the context of this meeting?" Hannibal asked. What he really meant was: *Hallucination or nightmare?*

He had never heard much about Will's parents- he only knew that his mother had left when he was very young and that his father hadn't exactly taken on the title of Dad Of The Year. Other than that Will had mentioned very little details about his life before the FBI. It was never relevant or important. Hannibal had tried to bring up family once, just once, but Will brushed him off and said that it wasn't crucial information.

"It was uh, a uhm, a dream," Will stuttered as he talked more with his hands than he did his mouth.

Hannibal had assumed that Will would go on to elaborate but he didn't. He just stopped talking as if there was nothing more to say. Hannibal had never seen Will so bothered- so

undone by something before.

“Will?” Hannibal raised an eyebrow and kept his voice low.

Will dragged his hands down the sides of his face and exhaled shakily, his chest rising and falling as he did so. He cleared his throat and locked eyes with Hannibal for the first time since they had entered the house.

“I’ve never dreamt about him before,” Will said in disgust. “Not once has he poisoned my thoughts. I don’t know why he was there tonight.”

“What did he do?” Hannibal wasn’t sure if he was referring to real life or the dream. He would accept either answer.

Will smiled in disbelief and scoffed. “That’s just it,” he said. “He did nothing. He just stood there in the darkness and looked at me... like a predator stalking its prey.”

“Did you often feel like you were prey to the predator that was your father?”

Will turned to the side and Hannibal could practically see the internal conflict racing through his head. He could tell that Will wanted to try and brush it off, bury his family history under another layer of ‘it isn’t important’. But it has seemed that he can no longer keep his past buried as it has somehow found its way to the surface and it demands to be known as the treasure it is.

“Yes,” Will admitted. “Think of my childhood as a rabbit living with a hungry wolf. While the hungry wolf can find other sources of food, the rabbit is always there for backup. The rabbit lives in constant fear of the wolf, not knowing when the day will come when he is finally hungry enough to eat the rabbit.”

Hannibal nodded his head slowly. “Tell me, Will, do you still feel like the rabbit? Or have you been feeling more wolf-like and your father returned to remind you of your original state?”

Will closed his eyes before speaking again. “I’ve always been the rabbit and I will continue to be the rabbit. I think that sometimes I’m just missing the wolf.”

“Does the wolf torment its prey before devouring it?” Hannibal asked. “Or is it a merciful, quick death?”

Will looked up at Hannibal and blinked a few times as if he was unable to understand the question. “Are you asking if my father abused me?”

Hannibal cocked his head. He already knew the answer but he needed to hear Will say it. While it might not have been physical abuse it was something traumatic enough to send Will down a spiral road that somehow ends up with him sitting in the freezing rain decades later.

“Abuse comes in so many different forms, Hannibal,” Will’s voice was just barely above a whisper. “Did he beat me day after day? No. But did he manage to slice through my psyche, permanently scarring it for eternity? Yes.”

Will buried his head in his hands, shielding himself from the world. Hannibal doesn't blame him. He waited a moment, allowing Will to catch his breath and regain his composure. It was a strange thing to see Will so broken. In Hannibal's mind, Will was the shattered teacup that gathered itself back up. The teacup that had somehow gotten all of its pieces to come together and once again be whole.

Seeing the teacup being shattered once more was almost heartbreaking.

"What did your father do to 'cut through your psyche'?" Hannibal leaned forward in his seat, anxiously awaiting Will's response.

Except he didn't respond. He kept his head buried in his hands and let out a shuddering breath, his frame shaking gently. Hannibal should have recognized that Will was close to his breaking point and when he heard the first muffled gasp he realized what was happening: Will Graham was crying.

Hannibal didn't know if Will's father lived anywhere close or even if he was still alive, but what that man did his son was far beyond rude. Hannibal figured that maybe one day he could kill him. Would Will appreciate him or hate him if he did that?

Hannibal had seen Will cry very little, maybe only once or twice out of sheer frustration. Never because of fear, though. Despite being a well-trained psychiatrist, Hannibal Lecter never knew how to act when people around him started to cry.

If this had been a therapy appointment, Hannibal would have handed his patient a box of tissues and waited patiently for them to catch their breath. Except this wasn't a therapy appointment and Will Graham was far past the point of being a patient.

Hannibal rose from his chair and took a seat next to Will on the couch, the cushion dipping under the weight of a second body. He was hesitant at first, wary about how intimate or physical he could get with Will. He raised his hand and placed it lightly on Will's back, not quite relaxing in case he needed to retract his arm quickly.

But Will didn't protest. He didn't give off any signs that he even acknowledged Hannibal's presence, but he didn't try to push him away. Hannibal removed the towel that was draped on Will's shoulders and tossed it to the side before beginning to rub his hand up and down Will's back, trying to do his best to be comforting. This wasn't exactly his strong suit.

Will turned and planted his head on Hannibal's shoulder, attempting to bury himself in the thick folds of Hannibal's clothes. He wrapped an arm around the crying boy and pulled him in, allowing him to press against the side of Hannibal's body.

"My dear boy," Hannibal murmured, trailing his fingers down the side of Will's arm.

Will grabbed Hannibal's shirt and held on like his life depended on it, as if it was the only lifeboat in his own sea of madness. The sobs tore through his chest and shook his body, his breathing staggered and desperate. Hannibal raked his hand through Will's damp hair as he tried to think of something to say to the fragile boy.

“My head’s a fucking mess,” Will cried apologetically.

“Then let me help you organize the clutter,” Hannibal said, his voice just a soft whisper.

His statement was a proposal, even if he didn’t quite know what he was proposing. Whatever it may be, Will agreed to it. He nodded his head and gently released Hannibal’s shirt as his sobs withered into shaking breathing.

Hannibal pulled away and cupped Will’s face in his hands. His eyes were red and puffy and he tried not to meet Hannibal’s gaze, possibly embarrassed for acting so vulnerable. Hannibal wiped his thumb across Will’s cheek and wiped away the tears that remained. He watched intently as Will flashed a tiny smile.

Hannibal didn’t know if he or Will initiated the movement, but there was a shared understanding and acceptance as Will laid his head down in Hannibal’s lap, drawing his legs up on the couch.

“Why don’t we finish this conversation at a later date, hmm?” Hannibal asked, wrapping a strand of Wil’s hair around his finger.

Will nodded his head and let out a heavy breath. Hannibal smiled down at Will, even though he knew Will wasn’t looking at him, and gently traced his finger over Will’s shoulder. He knew that the moment wouldn’t last forever, that Will would pick himself up again and push intimacy away again. He knew that Will would try to forget this whole mess ever happened and that he was perfectly fine. Will would probably try to tell Hannibal that his family history still wasn’t important.

In the long run, none of that actually mattered to Hannibal. All that mattered to him was the fact that Will Graham, someone who Hannibal would most likely never fully figure out, was falling asleep in his lap like a lost puppy who just wanted to feel safe.

Although maybe, just maybe, that wasn’t all that far from the truth.

End Notes

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